

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: SWEL, CGEN, MX, US

SUBJ: COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO SENATOR MONDALE BY
EXCELSIOR ON SUBJECT OF BABY SELLING

1. CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF AUGUST 24, 1976 CONTAINS
FOLLOWING INSERTION BY SENATOR MONDALE.

QUOTE: MR. PRESIDENT, IN 1975, THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILD-
REN AND YOUTH, WHICH I AM PRIVILEGED TO CHAIR, HELD HEAR-
INGS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BLACK AND GRAY MARKET IN
ADOPTION IN WHICH AN INTERMEDIARY CHARGES AN EXORBITANT
FEE FOR PLACING A CHILD WITH AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY. THE HEAR-
INGS ESTABLISHED THAT THERE IS IN FACT A "MARKET" IN WHICH
BABIES ARE "SOLD" IN THIS COUNTRY, AND IN MANY CASES THESE
"SALES" OF HUMAN BEINGS ARE ACTUALLY LEGAL.

I CALL TO THE ATTENTION OF MY COLLEAGUES AN EXCELLENT
SERIES OF ARTICLES WHICH APPEARED IN THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
ON THIS SUBJECT IN JUNE. THE SERIES FEATURED A NUMBER OF
PERSONAL STORIES OF UNWED MOTHERS AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS WHO
WERE INVOLVED IN SUCH "BABY SELLING" ACTIVITIES. THE SERIES
DEMONSTRATES THAT THIS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE PRACTICE OF BABY
SELLING CONTINUES TO FLOURISH. THE ARTICLES RAISE NUMEROUS
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IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MORALITY OF BABY SELLING,
THE ADEQUACY OF GOVERNMENTAL REGULATORY AUTHORITY, AND
THE EFFECTS OF BABY SELLING ON THE CHILDREN INVOLVED.

BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO
OUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF BABY SELLING, I ASK
UNANIMOUS CONSENT THAT THE SUN-TIMES SERIES BE PRINTED
IN THE RECORD. END QUOTE.

2. ONE SUCH ARTICLE IN THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES SERIES
THAT MADE MENTION OF US EMBASSY INVOLVEMENT APPEARED ON
JUNE 23, 1976 ENTITLED "MEXICAN ADOPTION PITFALLS BARED"
WRITTEN BY PAM ZEKMAN AND BOB OLMSTEAD. THIS PARTICULAR
ARTICLE AS IT APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD IS
QUOTED BELOW.

QUOTE: TO ANXIOUS COUPLES WHO HAVE FAILED TO ADOPT A
CHILD THROUGH CONVENTIONAL CHANNELS, THE IDEA OF PICKING
UP A BABY IN MEXICO CAN SOUND LIKE A LARK - A FOREIGN
VACATION COMBINED WITH THE REALIZATION OF THEIR DREAMS.
BUT THE EXPERIENCE OF THREE COUPLES WHO HAVE GONE THE
MEXICAN ROUTE INDICATES IT CAN BE A HARROWING, KAFKAESQUE
TANGLE OF RED TAPE UNLESS YOUR CONTACTS ARE RELIABLE. SOME
COUPLES LIVE FOR YEARS WITH THE FEAR THEIR BABIES WILL BE
TAKEN AWAY BECAUSE THEY OR THEIR AGENTS - EVEN UNKNOWINGLY
-BROKE THE LAW.

BECAUSE OF THIS FEAR, THE NAMES OF THE FOLLOWING
COUPLES AND SOME DETAILS OF THEIR STORIES HAVE BEEN CHANGED
TO CONCEAL THEIR IDENTITIES. MR. AND MRS. ADAMS WERE
CHARGED \$4,750 FOR THEIR ADOPTION, AND THEY SPENT ANOTHER
\$1,000 IN LIVING EXPENSES WHEN RED TAPE STRETCHED THEIR
MEXICO STAY INTO TWO WEEKS. WHEN WORD CAME THAT THE BABY
WAS BORN AND AVAILABLE, THEY WANTED TO LEAVE CHICAGO FOR
MEXICO CITY IMMEDIATELY. BUT THEIR LAWYER SAID THERE WAS
SOME LEGAL WORK TO DO FIRST, AND THEN IT WOULD BE SMOOTH
SAILING. "THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF INCREDIBLE DELAYS,"
SAID MRS. ADAMS. "OUR BABY WAS 6 MONTHS OLD BEFORE WE
COULD ACTUALLY GO DOWN AND GET HIM.

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"ONCE DOWN THERE, THE MEXICAN JUDGE GAVE US TROUBLE;
HE WOULDN'T SIGN THE ORDER. WE WERE TOLD IT WAS POLITICAL.
FINALLY, WE WENT TO ANOTHER JUDGE AND HE GOT THE ORDER.

"THEN THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH THE POLICE. THE
OPERATOR OF THE ORPHANAGE WANTED EVERYTHING DONE PROPERLY
AND HAD NOTIFIED POLICE OFFICIALS, AND ONE OF THEM WOULDN'T
APPROVE THE ADOPTION. BUT FINALLY WE GOT THE THING

THROUGH WITHOUT HIM.

"I DIDN'T THINK WE'D GET THE BABY OUT OF THE COUNTRY. TO TELL THE TRUTH, I WAS SCARED THE WHOLE TIME THAT WE WOULD BE STOPPED SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE.

"TO THIS DAY, WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN THE MEDICAL HISTORY OF THE MOTHER AND CHILD. FIRST THEY TOLD US THEY HAD IT IN SPANISH AND COULDN'T TRANSLATE IT. FINALLY, THEY SENT US ONE PARAGRAPH, WHICH WASN'T MUCH HELP."

THE ADAMS' EXPERIENCE WAS MILD COMPARED WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BENNETTS. THE BENNETTS, TOO, HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THEIR BABY WAS NEARLY 6 MONTHS OLD BEFORE THEY COULD LEAVE CHICAGO TO PICK HIM UP, SOMETHING THEY FEAR WAS HARMFUL TO THE CHILD.

"WHAT WE FIRST NOTICED ABOUT HIM WAS THAT HE WOULD SHAKE HIS HEAD FROM SIDE TO SIDE LIKE HE WAS TRYING TO SEE," SAID BENNETT. "I HAD READ THIS MAGAZINE ARTICLE ABOUT A STUDY DONE ON MONKEYS TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR MOTHERS AFTER BIRTH. THEY SHOOK THEIR HEADS FROM SIDE TO SIDE LIKE THEY WERE TRYING TO FIND THEIR MOTHERS, JUST LIKE OUR BABY.

"SO WE PICKED HIM UP AND TOOK HIM OUT OF THE CLINIC. WE GOT SOME BABY FORMULA AND WENT TO OUR HOTEL ROOM. WE WERE SO THRILLED WE BROKE OUT SOME CHAMPAGNE TO TOAST THE BABY.

"THE NEXT DAY WE TRIED TO PICK UP THE PAPERS FOR THE BABY'S PASSPORT, AND THAT'S WHEN THE TROUBLE STARTED.
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"FIRST WE HAD TO GET THE BABY'S HEALTH CHECKED. AT LAST, SOME DOCTOR LISTENED TO HIS HEART AND LET HIM THROUGH.

"THEN WE HAD TO GO TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO GET HIS PAPERS, AND WERE DIRECTED TO A MRS. LOPEZ. MRS. LOPEZ KEPT CALLING MY SON 'THE ORPHAN,' SAYING IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO GET OUR SON INTO THE UNITED STATES. SHE KEPT REPEATING IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

"SHE SAID WE HAD TO BE FINGERPRINTED BY THE FBI AND SUBMIT OUR TAX RETURNS FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS. SHE SAID WE HAD TO HAVE A STUDY DONE OF OUR HOME, EVEN THOUGH WE ALREADY HAD A VERY THOROUGH ONE.

"SHE SAID WE COULD GO HOME AND WAIT, OR STAY IN MEXICO CITY, BUT ALL THIS WOULD TAKE 30 TO 60 DAYS. SHE TOLD US THEY DIDN'T KNOW IF WE WERE SUITABLE PARENTS.

"ALL THIS WITH THE BABY IN MY WIFE'S ARMS.

"FINALLY, SHE DIRECTED US TO THE VISA SECTION, WHERE THERE WERE 400 PEOPLE WAITING IN LINE. WE STOOD IN LINE WITH OUR BABY FOR TWO HOURS.

"WHEN WE FINALLY GOT TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE, WE WERE TOLD THERE WAS NO WAY TO GET THE CHILD OUT."

THAT NIGHT, THE BENNETTS MANAGED TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW THE NEXT DAY WITH THE AMERICAN VICE COUNSEL. AGAIN THEY WENT BACK TO THE EMBASSY WITH THE BABY IN THEIR ARMS.

"WE WAITED SIX HOURS FOR THIS 10-MINUTE INTERVIEW," SAID BENNETT. "AND WE WALKED OUT OF THAT MEETING WITH NOTHING ACCOMPLISHED. HE TOLD US ABSOLUTELY NOT. THERE WAS NOTHING THAT COULD BE DONE.

"HOW DID I FEEL? OH MY GOD, HOW WOULD YOU FEEL? THIS IS ALL HAPPENING IN ONE WEEK. WE'RE AWAY FROM HOME - UNCLASSIFIED

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RATHER IN THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, OUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME - AND WE'RE GETTING THE BUREAUCRATIC FISH IN THE FACE.

"WE MET WITH SEVERAL OTHER EMBASSY PEOPLE, AND THEY FINALLY SAID THERE WAS ONLY ONE DEPARTMENT THAT COULD HELP US AND THAT WAS IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION. THAT WAS BACK TO MRS. LOPEZ.

"WE WENT BACK TO THE HOTEL THOROUGHLY DEJECTED AND CONVINCED THERE WAS MORE AT PLAY HERE THAN NORMAL BUREAUCRACY. WE THOUGHT THEY WERE ALL CROOKS.

"FINALLY, WE PUT DOWN ON PAPER AN ACCOUNT ."
END QUOTE.

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